DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 476 876 HE 035 899

TITLE	A Framework for Quality in Irish Universities: Meeting the Challenge of Change.
PUB DATE	2003-00-00
NOTE	70p.; Prepared by the Conference of Heads of Irish Universities.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.chiu.ie/Quality.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Evaluation Methods; Foreign Countries; *Higher Education; Institutional Evaluation; Intercollegiate Cooperation; *Models; *Quality Control; Self Evaluation (Groups)
IDENTIFIERS	*Ireland; Quality Assurance

ABSTRACT

In recent years, Irish universities have cooperated in developing quality assurance systems and in representing their approach nationally and internationally as a unique quality model. The quality framework that is described in this publication is the result of close collaboration among the universities, the Conference of Heads of Irish Universities, and the Inter-University Quality Steering Committee. The framework that is presented has been adopted by seven Irish universities, and the framework is proving effective. The approach is based on a holistic view of the university that involves all major stakeholders and external experts. Core aspects of the framework include: (1) operating principles based on quality as strategy, quality review as a driver of change, quality as analysis and reflection, and quality as a shared responsibility; (2) quality offices within the universities; (3) participation of students in quality reviews; (4) participation of stakeholders; and (5) four major elements of the process that include self-assessment, peer review, a peer review report, and the implementation of findings for continuing improvement. Seven appendixes provide background about the development of the framework and discussions of the context for higher education improvement in Ireland. (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 476 876

A FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY IN IRISH UNIVERSITIES

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. McGrath

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

HE 035 899

CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF IRISH UNIVERSITIES
2003

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY IN IRISH UNIVERSITIES

::

CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF IRISH UNIVERSITIES

Dublin
Conference of Heads of Irish Universities
2003

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CONTENTS

05 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

07 FOREWORD

09 PREFACE: SHAPING TOMORROW'S WORLD

13 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT + QUALITY ASSURANCE

25 CORE ASPECTS OF THE IRISH UNIVERSITIES' QUALITY FRAMEWORK

27 SELF ASSESSMENT

41 PEER REVIEW

43 FOLLOW-UP

53 REVIEW BY THE HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

55 APPENDIX 1:
Relevant Extracts from the Universities Act 1997

59 APPENDIX 2:
Conceptual Framework for Implementation of the Universities Act 1997

63 APPENDIX 3:
Policy and Legislative Context of Higher Education in Ireland, 1960 - 2002

65 APPENDIX 4
Typical Time-scale for a Quality Review

71 APPENDIX 5
Home Institutions of International Reviewers

75 APPENDIX 6
Institutional Context of Higher Education in Ireland

77 APPENDIX 7
Glossary of Acronyms

79 REFERENCES

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Conference of Heads of Irish Universities and the Inter-University Quality Steering Committee acknowledge the contribution of Cynthia Deane to the preparation of this publication.

FOREWORD

::

Recent social, political and legislative developments nationally and internationally have changed the context in which the Irish universities operate and signal the desirability of achieving more coherence and greater visibility for the quality systems embraced by the seven universities.

In recent years, the universities have co-operated in developing their quality assurance systems and in representing their approach nationally and internationally as a unique quality model, appropriate to the needs of the Irish Universities. The autonomy of each university to determine its own quality assurance procedures under the Universities Act 1997 encourages an emphasis on quality improvement and facilitates the development of procedures free of the bureaucracy which has become associated with quality assurance systems in some other countries.

The quality framework that is described in this publication is the result of close collaboration between the universities, and in particular it reflects the commitment of the Conference of Heads of Irish Universities and of the Inter-University Quality Steering Committee to collective action in this important strategic area. In this regard the leadership and work of Professor Aidan Moran, Registrar of University College Cork, as Chair of the IUQSC is gratefully acknowledged. The national importance of quality in the universities is clearly underlined by the funding that has been made available for this work by the Government to the Higher Education Authority under the National Development Plan.

Dr. Art Cosgrove
Chair
Conference of Heads of Irish Universities

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PREFACE:

SHAPING TOMORROW'S WORLD

::

1

" In the knowledge-based society of the twenty-first century, universities are well positioned to play an influential role in shaping tomorrow's world "

Malcolm Skilbeck

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Education at all levels is now recognised worldwide as being central to the social, economic and cultural well-being of society, as well as to the development and empowerment of the individual. There is a growing demand for access to higher learning, and this is giving rise to new models of participation, new modes of teaching and learning, and an increasing emphasis on lifelong and lifewide learning. In Ireland, as in many other countries, we have witnessed a massive growth in the numbers of learners participating in higher education in recent decades. There has also been a corresponding increase in the diversity of the student population, accompanied by a need for innovative responses from the providers of higher education.

In the knowledge-based society of the twenty-first century universities are well positioned to play an influential role in shaping tomorrow's world. They have demonstrated their viability and durability over the centuries, as well as the ability to change and to nurture the cultural and socio-economic development of individuals, communities and nations. In a world where change is pervasive it is important that universities assess, review and explore their performance and chart strategies to ensure that the higher education system is equipped to deal with the challenges arising from changing demographics, the impact of new technologies and globalisation, the cyclical shifts in the national and international economic environment and the changing skill needs of the economy.

The seven universities in Ireland are actively meeting these challenges, and in doing so they have made significant changes: in their culture, in their management, in their use of resources, in their relationships with stakeholders and in how they approach their core functions of learning and teaching, research, and service to the community. They are aware, as the Skilbeck Report affirms, that

...in all of this it is important to keep hold of the idea that the quest for knowledge is critical and creative and that the advancement of knowledge is entwined with the development of civilisation and quality of life for all. (Skilbeck, 2001)

The agenda for change in the Irish universities is continuing. Progress has been achieved through collective action in areas that will deliver sustainable advantage to the university sector in the coming years. Attention is focussed on a number of key strategic goals for the future, including:

- Collaborative policy review and planning in a national and international context
- Defining collective and institutional missions and strategies, while taking account of the need for differentiation and diversification
- Positioning the universities as a strong system within the higher education sector
- Appraising the quality of teaching, learning, research, administration and services, while setting high standards for future development.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The commitment to collective action on quality has been realised through the work of the Inter-University Steering Committee (IUQSC). This committee was established in 1995 and comprises two members from each of the universities, one of whom is the senior officer with responsibility for quality improvement, quality promotion and quality assurance. The committee has played a very active role in supporting the establishment of new structures and procedures for quality in all of the Irish universities over the past seven years, and in particular since the enactment of the Universities Act in 1997.

Context of this publication

This publication marks an important stage in the evolution of a framework for quality in Irish universities. From quite diverse traditions a new model of collaboration and collective action has emerged and the quality process in all of the universities has been enhanced by this collegial interaction. There is now an opportunity to make explicit the vision that has driven development to date, and to shape the future. This publication is complemented by a website (www.iuqb.ie) that includes more detailed operating guidelines for implementing quality assurance and quality improvement in the university sector. This website is also linked to the websites of each of the seven Irish universities.

The Irish universities have developed an approach to quality based on sound policies and principles, and on best international practice. A framework of common principles and operating guidelines has been adopted by the seven universities and this framework is proving effective. The Irish approach is based on a holistic view of quality in the university, involving all of the major stakeholders as well as external experts in the process, preserving institutional autonomy and emphasising quality improvement.

The establishment of the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) further consolidates the implementation of a systemic approach to quality improvement. By promoting and supporting best practice in maintaining and improving quality throughout the university sector, the Board adds value to the work of individual institutions and to the credibility of their external accountability. In addition it will play an important role in ensuring that the quality of Irish Universities compares with best international standards and in interacting with agencies at national and international level on quality matters.

This publication is aimed at a broad readership, including staff in the universities, national and international policy authorities, peer reviewers involved in the quality improvement and quality assurance process, students, the wider education community, business and industry interests, the media and the general public. It presents a picture of the current situation in Ireland's seven universities with regard to quality matters, and provides information on principles and practice. It is intended to foster debate and reflection among those engaged in promoting and improving quality in the universities. For that reason the publication is integrated with other resources, including a dedicated website and an annual conference on a quality-related theme. This is intended to enable constructive debate to continue and innovation to flourish, while also making it possible to provide up to date information on developments at institutional, national and international levels.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

2

"...procedures for quality assurance aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by the university"

Universities Act 1997, Section 35

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The goal of the quality assurance and quality improvement (QI/QA) process in Irish universities is to develop and foster a quality culture across all of their activities. Section 35 of the Universities Act 1997, with its explicit emphasis on quality improvement and university autonomy, provides a framework for the achievement of this goal (see appendix 1). Autonomy and quality improvement are crucial elements in the system of university evaluation which is being developed in Ireland, and indeed are crucial elements in any system which hopes ultimately to achieve an institution-wide culture of quality.

In discussing quality in a higher education context a number of principles have been advanced including the following:

- Quality assurance is a process through which a higher education institution guarantees to itself and to its stakeholders that its teaching, learning and other services consistently reach a high standard of excellence.
- Quality assurance refers to a set of procedures adopted by higher education institutions, national education systems and international agencies through which quality is maintained and enhanced.
- Quality assurance is most effective when its results are made public.
- Quality assurance can succeed only if it becomes inherent to the institutional culture. Such a culture generates the necessary motivation and ensures competence in implementing quality assurance mechanisms.

Over the years many evaluation schemes for higher education have been established in Europe and North America and these exhibit a wide variety of approaches. At one end of the spectrum there is the externally driven arrangement which aims at achieving politically determined agendas by means of rationalisation, targeting of resources, and a formal external inspectorate. At the other end there is the autonomous and improvement-orientated system generally favoured in the United States and Canada. This is the system which, by and large, has been adopted in Ireland as outlined in the Universities Act 1997. It is characterised by an emphasis

- on self-assessment, on self-regulatory activity in general and on the infrastructure for self-regulation in the university
- on institutional goals, and on the decisions for improvement which are made following a review involving external assessors.

With regard to the effectiveness of the various evaluation systems now in use internationally, Kells states that

> *...universities act more maturely in these matters if they are treated as trusted adults...and if they are wise enough to seize the responsibility for controlling the evaluation scheme and for self-regulation. In addition, the more institutions are expected to manage themselves, the more useful the results of self-regulatory evaluation. The less Government uses reductionist indicators ...the more effective, useful and change-orientated the schemes become.* (Kells, 1995).

Effectiveness of the quality system, and the possibilities for change and enhancement, are further strengthened by the bottom-up approach to self-assessment that has been adopted by the Irish universities. This is in contrast to the experience in some other countries where a top-down process was adopted, as Davies points out in a recent paper.

> *When quality assurance is initiated as a formal process, it is normally a top-down activity, fuelled by external accountability or financial reduction, requiring crisis management. Traditions of low corporate identity will create tension and defensiveness that are reflected in non-compliance with quality processes. This translates into a reluctance to admit errors and be self-critical, information then being passed upwards in a substantially unfiltered manner.* (Davies, 2002).

Put simply, the process for quality assurance and quality improvement in Irish universities comes down to answering four fundamental questions. These questions also form the basis of the Institutional Evaluation Programme of the European University Association (EUA):

- What are you trying to do?
- How are you trying to do it?
- How do you know it works?
- How do you change in order to improve?

These questions lead to reflection on mission, aims and objectives, on the systems and procedures in place and their suitability to fulfilling the mission, on the routine quality measures in use including feedback from students, staff, employers, and all clients, on strategic planning procedures and the capacity to change and meet new challenges.

The Irish universities follow international procedures designed to provide the answers to the above questions. The process comprises the following four elements:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1. A self-assessment report is drawn up under appropriate headings detailing the work done by the unit under review. The emphasis is on reflection, analysis, and improvement.
2. A peer review group reads the self-assessment report and spends a number of days on a site visit to the unit. The review group, which includes external experts, completes a report on their findings which emphasises recommendations for improvement. The peer review group report is submitted to the governing authority.
3. The peer review group report is made available to the public.
4. Finally there is follow-up with a view to implementing improvements.

Carrying through this programme of self-assessment and peer review is a complex, costly and time-consuming task. The process is described in more detail in sections 4-7, below.

There are several features of the Universities Act 1997 in relation to quality assurance in universities which collectively make it unique:

- It requires the cyclical evaluation of all activities of the universities, "of each department, and where appropriate, faculty of the university and any service provided by the university...". Thus the scope of the process in Ireland is wide: quality review applies to teaching and learning, research, administration, and all other aspects of activity in the university. The operation of the process can be at the level of academic departments, administrative and service departments, academic programmes, student services, faculties and the institution as a whole.

- It requires implementation of the recommendations for quality improvement arising out of a review "unless, having regard to the resources available to the university or for any other reason, it would, in the opinion of the governing authority, be impractical or unreasonable to do so."

- It preserves the autonomy of the institutions... "A governing authority...shall...require the chief officer to establish procedures for quality assurance...". Hand in hand with this academic freedom goes a necessary public accountability. The governing authority must arrange, after consultation with the HEA, for a review of the procedures at least every fifteen years, and must publish the results of this review. However it is the intention of the universities to go further and, following best international practice, they will make available to the public all reports prepared by the review teams.

Within the requirements of the Universities Act, the Irish universities have worked together to develop a framework for quality based on common principles. This framework is built on the collective experience of the Irish universities and has taken account of best international policy and practice. The universities see the quality process as an important way to drive and support strategic change in the universities and as a basis for systematic quality improvement. A conceptual framework for the implementation of the quality assurance provisions of the Universities Act is included in appendix 2.

2.2 INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Quality and the pursuit of excellence are embedded in the tradition of higher education internationally. Over the decades and centuries there has been a history of continuous development, adaptation and improvement, with the integration of successive advances into the life of the university. The contemporary emergence of formalised quality improvement and quality assurance systems is another stage in this evolution. Parallel with this development there have been increasing opportunities in recent years for international communication through which information and experience of different national approaches can be shared.

Since the 1970s universities have become increasingly responsive to a variety of international influences. On the one hand there has been the success of a range of EU-sponsored mobility and student exchange initiatives (the best known being ERASMUS and SOCRATES), and on the other there has been an ever-increasing growth in international research initiatives, technology transfer and staff exchanges. In addition to these trends, universities and other higher education institutions internationally have become increasingly aware of quality approaches in business and industry, and academic institutions have been proactive in adopting and indeed customising for the academic environment many of the quality approaches originally developed in the commercial sector.

A European Union pilot project which ran from 1994-1996, in which Ireland participated, represents a significant initiative in the area of quality improvement and quality assurance in higher education. The EU Commission published a final report on the outcome of the project in 1996. (EU Commission, 1996).

The increased international policy focus on quality assurance in higher education has been specifically acknowledged in the Bologna Declaration. The declaration, signed by thirty-one states including Ireland in June 1999, declared a commitment to the "promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies". The objectives to be achieved for European higher education by 2010 include the promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance. This was further ratified in the Salamanca Convention (2001) and in a communiqué from the European education ministers' meeting in Prague (2001).

The Bologna process is acquiring a growing momentum, and an increasing emphasis is being placed on the importance of quality assurance systems in maintaining and setting standards and in facilitating comparability of qualifications in Europe. The current developments in the process involve European Ministers seeking to ensure that there is an alignment between policy developments at national level and the objectives of the Bologna Declaration. This will affect Ireland, making it important that the Irish Universities consolidate their existing arrangements for quality assurance and safeguard the autonomy and integrity of the process.

At practitioner level the European University Association (EUA), a representative group of some six hundred universities and thirty-two university rectors' conferences, supports the development of common quality benchmarks for higher education institutions throughout Europe. There is also an influential European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) in Higher Education, which the IUQB will seek to join.

Quality improvement and quality assurance processes in higher education internationally have informed the Irish universities' approach in developing a framework for quality that takes account of the lessons learned from the experience of other countries. Since it is now widely accepted that higher education is a crucial element in the development of national and international economies, Ireland's universities, between them catering for a total of 83,000 students, are fully cognisant of the international quality environment in higher education. The principles underpinning the Irish universities' quality framework are clearly part of an international context. An Irish model of good practice continues to evolve, integrating the unique culture and traditions of the seven Irish universities within a supportive framework for quality improvement and quality assurance.

2.3 IRISH CONTEXT

Universities have always had implicit quality assurance of the effectiveness of their degree programmes and their research activity. In Ireland, for example, there has been a long tradition of external quality review in the universities, including:

- Involvement of external examiners in primary and higher degrees
- Peer-review system of research publication
- Peer-review system of assessing applications for research grants
- Invitations to academic staff to teach and carry out research abroad
- Involvement of staff as peer reviewers and extern examiners internationally
- Feedback related to the employability of graduates and their progression to prestigious international graduate programmes
- External membership of selection groups for academic appointments.

In addition, some university degrees are accredited by professional bodies and other external agencies. The accreditation process is important in the current quality context, in that it represents for the universities an additional measure of quality assurance according to external criteria.

However it is only in relatively recent years that quality processes and procedures in Ireland and internationally have been formalised, using a new vocabulary, literature and typology of approaches. The operation of quality procedures in universities worldwide is now more complex

and systematic, particularly in the contemporary climate of increasing demand for public accountability. In Ireland, while the legislative framework for quality improvement and quality assurance in the universities is set out explicitly in the Universities Act 1997, the concept of "quality" in higher education has featured as an element of policy and regulatory instruments in Ireland since the 1960s. A list of the relevant documents that delineate the policy and legislative context for higher education in Ireland is given below. A more detailed summary of the main documents is included in appendix 3.

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN IRELAND	
1967	Report of Commission on Higher Education
1971	HEA Act
1979	NCEA Act
1980	NIHE Acts
1992	DIT Act
1992	RTC Act
1992	Green Paper: *Education for a Changing World*
1994	Report on the National Education Convention
1995	White Paper: *Charting our Education Future*
1997	Universities Act
1999	Qualifications (Education and Training) Act
2001	Skilbeck Report, published by HEA and CHIU

Ireland has a strong tradition of robust public debate on all matters related to education policy. Consequently, governments have adopted a partnership approach to many issues, avoiding a top-down imposition of regulation in favour of a more devolved model of self-regulation within a clear legislative framework. This model is the basis of the Irish universities' approach to the development of measures to improve quality.

The Conference of Heads of Irish Universities has provided a forum through which the universities have collectively shaped policy and guided the practice of quality improvement and quality assurance across the sector. The universities, through CHIU, actively contributed to the debate on quality improvement and quality assurance in higher education that surrounded the publication of the government's White Paper on Education in 1995. A paper published by CHIU in 1995 documents the universities' proposed quality framework (CHIU, 1995). This formed the basis of the CHIU pilot projects conducted in all of the universities in 1995-1998. The outcomes of these projects are documented in a report published by the IUQSC in 1998 (IUQSC, 1998). The subsequent development of the quality framework was influenced by the project's findings, especially in relation to organisational structures, resources and communication with participants in the process.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Universities Act 1997

The Universities Act was the first piece of legislation to set out specifically the responsibilities of the universities for quality improvement and quality assurance. It is explicitly stated in Section 35 of the Act that the goal of the process is quality improvement. In relation to academic quality assurance one of the objects of a university is specified as promoting "the highest standards in, and quality of, teaching and research". The Act requires each university to "establish procedures for quality assurance aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by the university."

The universities are required to achieve this by a combination of self-assessment and peer review. They are also required to "provide for the publication in such form and manner as the governing authority thinks fit of findings arising out of the application of these procedures", and to implement the outcomes of the evaluations having regard to the resources available to the universities. The responsibility for the review timetable and publication rests with the university governing authorities, and not with any external authority.

The Act provides a framework for institutions to develop their quality processes. Section 35 requires each university to review the quality of the work of all faculties, academic departments and service (including administrative) departments on a ten-year cycle. While each university is free to develop its own procedures in fulfilling its obligations under the Act, close co-operation has been achieved through the continuing work of the IUQSC. Building on the lessons learned from the pilot projects the universities, through the IUQSC, have developed a framework comprising a set of common principles and operating guidelines for quality improvement and quality assurance. Each university has integrated these principles and guidelines into its own practice in a way that ensures coherence across the system while respecting the autonomy of each university and the diversity of institutional cultures.

The Universities Act also effected a number of significant changes in the role of the Higher Education Authority in relation to the higher education institutions, not least in relation to quality assurance matters. For example, under section 49 the Authority may, in consultation with the universities, and with a view to assisting the universities, review and report on the quality assurance procedures established by each university. Sections 35 and 49 of the Act are included in appendix 1.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999

The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 is the other significant piece of legislation governing quality assurance procedures in the universities and other institutes of higher education. This act established the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) and two new awards bodies, HETAC (Higher Education and Training Awards Council) and FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council). The Act, which provides for the establishment of a national qualifications framework, includes important provisions in relation to procedures for quality assurance in higher education institutions. In relation to the existing seven universities the Act requires the HEA to consult with the NQAI in performing its functions under sections 35 and 49(b) of the Universities Act (1997).

2.4 IRISH UNIVERSITIES QUALITY BOARD

The governing authorities of the seven Irish universities have established the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB). The Board comprises the current, past and incoming Chairs of CHIU, the registrars of the remaining four universities, and seven external members. The external members include at least two persons from outside Ireland with experience of accreditation quality assurance of academic programmes in universities in Europe and North America. External members also include a person with experience of professional accreditation and a person with a background in quality improvement and assurance as it relates to management and services. One of the external members acts as Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive of the IUQB acts as Secretary. The Executive Committee of the Board comprises two members from each of the universities, one of whom is the senior officer with responsibility for quality improvement, quality promotion and quality assurance.

The Board's aims are:

- To increase the level of inter-university co-operation in developing quality assurance processes
- To represent the Irish universities nationally and internationally on issues related to quality assurance and quality improvement
- To articulate, on behalf of the governing authorities of the universities, the resource implications of recommendations for quality improvement.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The terms of reference for the Board are:

- While recognising the autonomy of each university in relation to its quality assurance procedures, to support the universities in the development and implementation of appropriate policies and procedures directed at improving the quality of the education and services they offer.
- To facilitate reviews of the effectiveness of such procedures through the establishment of an agreed panel of reviewers/review agencies.
- To identify good practice for maintaining and improving quality and promote its adoption within the Irish University sector.
- To monitor and report on the resource implications of recommendations for quality improvement arising from quality assurance reviews having regard to the need to assure that the quality of Irish universities compares with best international standards.
- To promote the image of the Irish University sector in relation to quality assurance nationally and internationally.
- To advise the Conference of Irish Universities (CHIU) on issues relating to quality and quality assurance.
- To interact with the Higher Education Authority in relation to quality assurance and in particular in regard to provisions of the Universities Act 1997.
- To interact with agencies at national, EU and international level in relation to matters of quality assurance in university education including accreditation.
- To carry out such other functions consistent with its role as may be assigned to it by the universities.

The Board will have a particular role in regard to protocols for the conduct of the reviews of the effectiveness of the quality assurance procedures in the universities as required by Section 35(4) of the Universities Act 1997. The Board will approve the agencies that will conduct these periodic reviews and will provide reports on this process to the Council of CHIU and to the HEA. The Board will also receive the annual report of the executive committee on the implementation of these procedures and will report on issues arising to CHIU and the HEA. Each year one meeting of the Board will take place in conjunction with a conference on a major theme related to quality improvement.

A defining characteristic of the modern learning organisation is the readiness to recreate itself through a close understanding of its environment and the opportunities provided by that environment for both adaptive change and novel ways of growing and developing ... The university should be, by definition, a learning organisation.

Malcolm Skilbeck

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CORE ASPECTS OF THE IRISH UNIVERSITIES' QUALITY FRAMEWORK

::
3

"I have reviewed a dozen major universities in the United States in the past four years for the North Central Association of Universities and Colleges. I have also reviewed programmes at other universities as a consultant. Much of this university's process is the same as that used by major American universities. I rank the execution of the process at this university among the best of this group.

Typical arrangement in the US involves an external committee and an internal committee. The external committee provides a report that becomes part of the internal committee's final report to the university. I like this university's structure of having a single committee of internal and external reviewers that must produce a report collaboratively."

Professor Morteza Amir Rahimi
Northwestern University

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

3.1. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The Irish universities are committed to the development of a quality culture through the implementation of systems that promote and enhance the quality of all aspects of their mission: teaching and learning, research, administration and support services, and service to the community. The framework for quality improvement and assurance in Irish universities is informed by the key principles of individual and collective ownership, inclusiveness, collegiality, continuous improvement, public accountability, transparency and autonomy. These principles accord closely with the legislative framework set out in the Universities Act 1997. A distinctive feature of the Irish approach is that it is based on primary legislation, which is not the case in all countries.

Quality as strategy

In articulating a set of principles for reviewing the quality of their work the Irish universities have been guided by a commitment to focus on quality enhancement and strategic planning at the level of the unit being reviewed, and to foster innovation by evaluating units against their aims, objectives and strategic plans. Based on the experience of EU pilot projects and the guidelines subsequently adopted by the EUA it is a central principle that the institutions are being evaluated against their own targets in the context of appropriate international benchmarks.

Quality review as a driver of change

There is a clear emphasis on a searching and honest self-assessment by the unit as a crucial step in fostering effective change and improvement. For this reason, and in order to sustain the integrity of the self-assessment, this element of the process is confidential to the institution. On the other hand, in the interests of public accountability, the Irish universities are committed to publication of the results of the external reviews. These procedures are in keeping with best international practice.

Quality as analysis and reflection

The Irish universities' model of quality improvement and quality assurance is a continuous cycle of analysis, reflection, and action, providing flexibility to design systems appropriate to the diverse needs of institutions. This model provides opportunity for experimentation and for modification based upon lessons learned. It enables appropriate aims and objectives to be formulated, and quality improvements to be directed at achieving these aims and objectives. It is bottom up in spirit and developmental in design. It is a key feature that ownership of this process rests with each university, and quality review is now an important element in each university's commitment to planning, development and strategic change. It is noted that in many higher education systems nationally and internationally, quality processes are controlled by an

external agency. In Ireland however, both the government and the universities, in their interaction during the framing of the Universities Act, acknowledged the value of ownership and primary responsibility remaining with the universities.

Quality as a shared responsibility

The Irish universities acknowledge that ownership of quality mechanisms must be shared among those directly involved. Thus, while the common principles and operating framework are applied to each institution's systems for quality assurance and improvement, there is institutional autonomy and responsibility regarding the exact nature of quality procedures and protocols. This allows for diversity to be maintained, in keeping with the spirit of the Act, which refers in section 14 to the "independent ethos and traditions" of the universities. Furthermore, it is considered crucial that the assessment of quality relates to the objectives set by each individual institution and its constituent units so that the fundamental aims of the university and the aims of quality improvement are advanced by the quality improvement process.

3.2. QUALITY OFFICES

Each of the universities has established a quality office with responsibility for quality assurance and quality improvement in all areas of the university's mission. Working within the common set of principles outlined above, each quality office has devised a quality assurance and improvement framework to promote a high quality student experience and a high standard of service across all university functions. The quality office works closely with a broadly based university committee that is responsible for developing the university's policy on quality improvement and quality assurance.

The role of these quality offices includes:

- Providing proactive professional support for the development of university policy in relation to quality assurance and improvement in line with best international practice
- Promoting a sense of ownership by individual departments and units of the university's continuous quality assurance and improvement systems and procedures
- Supporting departments and units in implementing internal and external quality review processes.

Promoting and supporting innovation

There is a particular emphasis within the quality offices on encouraging innovations in teaching and learning, together with the promotion of teaching excellence as a scholarly activity. Developments in these areas are considered as major contributors to quality improvement. Working with the deans, department heads and other university officers, the quality offices ensure that academic departments have mechanisms in place to involve all staff, students and other relevant stakeholders in the quality review process.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

An expanding mandate for quality offices

From their inception the quality offices were established to embed a commitment to quality improvement by promoting regular reviews across the whole university as a mechanism for educational development and organisational change. The remit of the quality offices is now expanding, however, as the internal and external environment of quality improvement and quality assurance changes. The broader role now includes facilitating change at organisational level. Quality offices are supported in achieving this mandate by the growing systematic and sector-wide commitment to quality principles and procedures. In each university the quality office is therefore well placed to promote the development of strategic responses to emerging quality issues, and to ensure that quality awareness infuses the institutional culture.

Working collectively with colleagues from the other universities through the IUQSC, key staff in the quality offices share experience and disseminate good practice. This collaboration is proving effective in promoting:

- Awareness of quality: developing a clear vision, a reflective approach, and a dynamic commitment to quality assurance and improvement at the levels of policy and practice across the whole university sector.
- Dialogue: creating opportunities for, and contributing to, communication and debate on quality issues.
- Collaboration: adopting an inclusive approach which emphasises the institutional benefits of working effectively with colleagues and students on quality improvement activities, in addition to collaboration at national and international levels.
- Flexibility: recognising that quality assurance is a complex and evolving area, so that established functions and activities require continuous evaluation and refinement.

3.3. PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS IN QUALITY REVIEWS

The quality system in each university explicitly recognises the importance of involving students in the review process, particularly in reviews of academic departments and of units that directly provide information and services to students. This is in keeping with the legislation, which specifies students as a group of stakeholders who must be consulted in the review process.

The university committee that oversees the review process normally includes student members, as does the committee that prepares the self-assessment report. In addition the report routinely contains the results of student questionnaires on the quality of teaching and courses in the department, as well as student feedback on services and the general student experience. Academic review groups are given the opportunity to meet privately and at length with representative groups of students in order to hear their opinions and their experiences. Students may also participate in quality reviews of administrative, service and support units. In such cases the views of students and others availing of the services of the unit are usually assessed by means of questionnaires or focus groups.

3.4. PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

Universities have a very wide range of internal and external stakeholders, all of whom have a legitimate interest in the quality of service provided by the institution across all of its key functions. Internal stakeholders include staff and students, while external stakeholders include graduates, employers and professional bodies, tax payers, the local and national community, social partners, government and public authorities, the EU and relevant international agencies. A variety of methods is used by the universities to assess and to take into account the opinions of a range of stakeholder groups. In some universities, the external members of governing authorities and their associated committees play an important role in this respect. In addition, there is an increasing and developing role being played by advisory groups of external and stakeholder representatives which the universities acknowledge adds value to the quality process.

The participation of persons representing employers' points of view in the review process is recognised as desirable in all Irish universities. The views of employers and professional bodies are seen as particularly relevant in the case of departments and programmes educating graduates for specific industries or sectors.

3.5. ELEMENTS OF THE PROCESS

Based on the principles outlined above the Irish universities have collectively agreed a framework for their QI/QA systems which is consistent with both the legislative requirements of the Universities Act and international best practice. Quality reviews are carried out in academic, administrative and service departments, and as appropriate in schools, faculties, and academic programmes. For simplicity these are referred to as "units" in the outline of the review process below. Within the cycle of reviews adopted by the institution, units will have adequate advance notice of their review schedule (see appendix 4 for a typical review timescale). The review model comprises four major elements:

- preparation of a self-assessment report by the unit;
- peer review involving external experts, both national and international;
- peer review group report made publicly available by the governing authority of the university;
- continuing improvement through implementation of findings within the resources available to the university.

As described in the previous section a dedicated quality office in each institution manages the quality process. In the following sections the elements of the process are outlined and are related to the principles, policies and international experience set out in preceding sections.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SELF-ASSESSMENT

::

4

"The review was an excellent exercise. It really got the department to focus on the strategic issues in a thoughtful way. The exercise explicitly recognises the professionalism of academics, unlike similar structures for instance in the UK, where the initial assumption is that it is up to the academics to prove that they are professional in the first instance. The external reviewers engage substantively with the process, and do not merely get caught up in paper-chasing exercises, which is sometimes the case in more top-down quality control-oriented systems in other countries."

Dr. Seán Ennis
Strathclyde University

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

4.1. SELF-ASSESSMENT RATIONALE

Self-assessment is the first crucial step that a unit takes in answering the four basic questions suggested by the EUA and noted in section 2.1 above, namely,

- What are you trying to do?
- How are you trying to do it?
- How do you know it works?
- How do you change in order to improve?

Self-assessment is a process by which a unit reflects on its objectives and critically analyses the activities it engages in to achieve these objectives. It provides an evaluation of the unit's performance of its functions, its services and its administration. Using the published guidelines and criteria the unit records the evaluation in a self-assessment report. Each university has developed detailed instruments to guide the preparation and outline the content of self-assessment reports for all units. At the end of this stage of the process the unit has an agreed statement of its purposes, a description and evaluation of its work and a map for its future development. The report

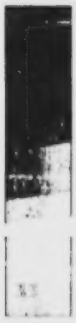
- presents detailed information about the unit, and the collective perception of staff and students of their role not only in the university but where appropriate in the international community and in the social, cultural and economic development of Ireland
- presents a succinct but comprehensive statement of the unit's strategic objectives
- shows the quality systems and processes that are already in place and permits an assessment of their effectiveness
- provides a comprehensive self-critical analysis of the activities of the unit, which includes benchmarking
- helps the unit to identify and analyse its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and allows it to suggest appropriate remedies where necessary
- identifies those weaknesses, if any, in procedural, organisational and other matters, which are under the control of the unit and which can be remedied by action
- identifies shortfalls in resources and provides an externally validated case for increased resource allocation
- provides a framework within which the unit can continue to work in the future towards quality improvement.

Self-assessment is considered to be the core component of the Irish universities' quality framework, with emphasis placed on the value to the unit of this analytical and self-critical process. The preparation of the self-assessment report acts as a stimulus and provides opportunities for reflection and consultation, enabling units to plan and manage strategically, and to align their development plans with those of the whole university. The main emphasis in all of the self-assessment processes is on qualitative analysis. Quantitative data are also provided to

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

support the evaluation, providing a statistical overview of the size and level of activities of the unit under review.

The self-assessment report provides the peer review group with essential information to prepare both the review visit and the final review report. The preparation of self-assessment reports follows essentially the same process for all units within an institution. However, the content of reports will vary with the nature of the unit. Examples of methodologies used by the universities are outlined in section 4.5.



4.2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNIT CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

At the outset of the process the unit usually appoints a co-ordinating committee that is responsible for preparing the self-assessment report. The committee is representative of all staff in the unit and may also include a user representative. The committee is an operational one and meets frequently, usually every month at the start of the process, but often on a weekly basis when the report is being finalised. All staff members of the unit are kept fully informed about the self-assessment process and are encouraged to contribute their views.

"On our visit the prior documentation, the preparations, the presentations and the discussions with staff were of the very highest quality. It is clear to us that the staff regarded our review as a very significant event."

Professor D.Hatherly, University of Edinburgh and Professor Derek Abell, Institute for Management Development, Lausanne, Switzerland

4.3. PREPARATION OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT BY THE UNIT

The quality office provides a template for the self-assessment report. It also provides a selection of questionnaires to assist in the gathering of the views of the students and staff and, where appropriate, the other users of the unit's services. These sample questionnaires may be adapted to the specific needs of the unit.

In conducting the self-assessment and writing the report units are encouraged to adopt practices that are inclusive of all staff and to ensure that user groups are consulted.

4.4. ROLE OF THE QUALITY OFFICE DURING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PHASE

During the preparation of the report the quality office is available to assist the unit co-ordinating committee in a variety of ways: to interpret the guidelines, to prepare suitable questionnaires, to provide advice on the methodology of the self-assessment. In some cases facilitators are appointed by the quality office to assist in these tasks. The quality office forwards the self-assessment report to the members of the peer review group some weeks before the site visit.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

4.5 EXAMPLES OF SELF-ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

	Membership of Co-ordinating Committee for an academic department: an example

- Head of department, academic staff member(s) at a range of grades
- Department secretary / executive assistant
- Member of technical staff (where appropriate)
- Member of the post-doctoral or full-time research staff
- Post-graduate student

	Outline of self-assessment report for an academic department: an example

Quality Improvement: Analysis and Recommendations

Quality Assurance: Information on

- Unit details
- Individual profiles of all staff: academic, administrative and support
- Mission and strategic objectives
- Unit planning and organisation
- Teaching and Learning, Feedback from Students
- Curriculum Development and Review
- Research and scholarly activity
- Staff development
- External relations
- Support services
- Methodology for preparation of the self-assessment report, including questionnaires used

Membership of Co-ordinating Committee for an administrative/ service unit: an example

- Head of Unit
- Representative of staff at each grade
- Unit secretary / Executive assistant

* For a large unit it may be necessary to have a number of subcommittees dealing with the co-ordination of the preparation of the self-assessment report at the level of each section, and a unit co-ordinating committee consisting of the chair/representative of each of the section committees

Outline of self-assessment report for an administrative/service unit: an example

Quality Improvement: Analysis and Recommendations
Quality Assurance: Information on

- Unit details
- Individual profiles of all staff
- Mission and strategic objectives
- Definition of services and procedures
- Definition of users of services
- Identification of measures of performance
- Feedback from users on quality of service
- Review of objectives and performance
- Staff Development
- Communication
- External Relationships
- Methodology for preparation of the self-assessment report, including questionaires used

Outline of self-assessment report for a faculty: an example

Quality Improvement: Analysis and Recommendations
Quality Assurance: Information on

- Faculty details
- Mission and strategic objectives
- Planning and budgeting
- Organisation
- Degree programmes
- Students
- Teaching and learning
- Research and scholarly activity
- Staff
- Quality Systems
- Support Services
- External Relations
- Methodology for preparation of the self-assessment report, including questionnaires used

Outline of self-assessment report for an academic programme: an example

Quality Improvement: Analysis and Recommendations
Quality Assurance: Information on

- details
- Individual profiles of all staff involved in delivery of programme: academic, administrative and support
- Programme planning and organisation
- Teaching and learning, feedback from students
- Curriculum evaluation and review
- Support services
- Reporting methodology

4.6. CONTENT OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR AN ACADEMIC UNIT

Quality Improvement: Analysis and Recommendations

Since the primary goal of the process is quality improvement, the report highlights the formulation of strategies and recommendations for improving the work of the unit.

Quality Assurance

Mission statement, aims and objectives

Contains the unit's mission statement, and its relation to the mission statement of the university; the unit's aims and objectives in terms of the students, the staff, the discipline, the profession or employment sector where appropriate, the university and society generally. Also includes the aims and objectives for improving the quality of all activities of the unit; the strategies for achieving these aims; the unit's plans for measuring its success in achieving its aims, with special reference to improving the quality of teaching and learning and enhancing the quality of research. There is a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the unit, and the opportunities and threats it currently faces. Where the unit has been benchmarked against a comparable unit in Ireland or abroad, the outcomes are described.

Unit and staff details

Contains profiles of all academic, administrative and service support staff; a description and analysis of staff composition and status, including gender balance; the physical facilities available to the unit.

Unit planning and organisation

Describes management and committee structures within the unit; budget allocation; workload assignments; means of communication with staff, students, faculty offices, other administration and service units in the university.

Teaching and learning

Describes and analyses all taught programmes, teaching and learning evaluations, arrangements for curriculum review and revision, feedback from student questionnaires, external examiners and employers/professional bodies.

Research & scholarly activity

Provides evidence of research activity undertaken in the past five years and a brief outline of the research interests of each staff member. Data include publications, research grants and research degrees awarded.

Staff development

Considers how staff development needs are systematically identified and supported in relation to individual aspirations, the needs of the unit and institutional requirements; evaluates staff participation in developmental activities, indicating the role these activities play in attaining the strategic goals of the unit.

External relations

Describes the unit's external relations with other groups within the university and the wider community, with other educational institutions in Ireland and abroad, with industry, public agencies, professional bodies, potential graduate employers.

Support Services

Gives the views of the unit on the quality of the support services in the university, including the library and IT support.

Methodology for preparation of the self-assessment report

Describes the process followed by the unit in carrying out the self-assessment.

Completed Questionnaires

Includes copies or samples of questionnaires completed by students and academic, administration and support staff.

4.7 CONTENT OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE/SERVICE UNIT

In most countries there is no legal requirement to review the work of university administrative and service units. Ireland is an exception to this general rule. In developing a model for the self-assessment of such units the Irish universities have studied procedures used in the business world and have adapted them appropriately to the academic environment. Nevertheless special difficulties presented themselves. The range of administrative and support services in a university is extremely wide, each with its own ethos, objectives and work practices. Consideration of the differences between, for example, the roles of the Library, the Registrar's office, Student Services, or the Computer Centre highlights this point. A range of services may be included in a single unit, or alternatively a service may operate as a discrete unit with only one or two staff members. Nevertheless it is possible to list a number of key elements in the process of self-assessment.

Definition of services and procedures

Contains the unit's mission statement, aims and objectives; describes the key activities of the unit and indicates the nature and scope of services provided to its clients.

Definition of users of services

Identifies the unit's key user groups, the individuals and other units to whom it provides a service, both within the institution and external to it.

Identification of measures of performance

Identifies appropriate measures of performance which facilitate the unit in assessing the extent to which it is meeting its key aims and objectives.

Feedback from users on quality of service

Describes and analyses feedback from users by means of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups, as appropriate.

Review of objectives and performance

Reviews the unit's performance and the achievement of its objectives; considers whether changes are appropriate in order to fulfil its core mission.

Staff Development

Considers how staff development needs are systematically identified and supported in relation to individual aspirations, the needs of the unit and institutional requirements; evaluates staff participation in developmental activities, indicating the role these activities play in attaining the strategic goals of the unit.

Communication

Considers the unit's internal and external communications systems, including mechanisms for communication between the unit and its user groups.

External relationships

Reflects on the extent to which staff members contribute to the development of the university, the development and maintenance of standards in their particular area, and the broader needs of society at local, regional and national level.

PEER REVIEW

::
5

"The peer review process that I was involved with in this university was extremely well planned and carried out with superb efficiency. It was fully transparent and involved ALL staff members (senior scientists, lecturers, group secretary and laboratory technicians) rather than a selection of staff as in some university quality review exercises."

Professor John Robinson
Scottish Agriculture College

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

5.1 PEER REVIEW GROUP

Soon after the completion of the self-assessment report the unit is visited by a peer review group that includes at least two external experts who are capable of making national and international comparisons with respect to the activities of the unit. The group may also include two or three senior staff members of the university. The fundamental issues dealt with by the peer review group are once again contained in the four basic questions posed in section 2.1 above, with special emphasis on the final question: how do you change in order to improve?

For some academic departments and programmes a representative of an organisation that employs a significant number of graduates may be included. For administrative and service units external peer reviewers are generally people from a relevant professional background with appropriate expertise in the area under review. The independence of external review group members is assured by excluding people who are currently associated with the unit, for example as a research collaborator or external examiner or commercial client. A list of the home institutions of international members who have taken part in review groups in all Irish universities in the past five years appears in appendix 5.

Objectives

The objectives of the peer review group are to

- Clarify and verify details in the self-assessment report
- Verify how well the aims and objectives of the unit are fulfilled, having regard to the available resources
- Confirm the unit's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as outlined in the self-assessment report
- Discuss any perceived strengths and weaknesses not identified in the self-assessment report
- Check the suitability of the working environment
- Make recommendations for improvement.

Functions

The functions of the peer review group are to

- Study the self-assessment report
- Visit the unit over two or three days, meet staff, students, senior university officers, graduates, employers, and representatives of all categories of users of the services of the unit, as appropriate
- Clarify and verify details in the self-assessment report, and consider other relevant documentation
- Review the activities of the unit in the light of the self-assessment report
- Prepare a draft report and present the main findings in an exit presentation
- Write the peer review group report.

The peer review group report is a crucial element in ensuring the impact of the quality review process. This report presents conclusions and recommendations for improvement based on consideration of the self-assessment documentation and the outcomes of the site visit.

5.2. NOMINATION AND SELECTION OF THE PEER REVIEW GROUP

Normally the selection of members of the peer review group is made by the university committee responsible for quality assurance. A review group always includes a number of external experts and may include senior staff of the university who are not members of, or closely associated with, the unit under review.

As an example, a typical peer review group for an academic unit might include:

- Two external experts, one from abroad and one from another Irish university
- Two internal senior academics from departments not closely associated with the unit being reviewed.

5.3. CONTACT WITH THE PEER REVIEW GROUP

The nominated members of the review group are contacted by the quality office to confirm their participation in the review. Once the membership of the group is confirmed the quality office informs the unit accordingly. At this stage the quality office sends background information about the unit and the university to the review group, as well as the university guidelines for quality review and some background on the statutory aspects of the quality review process in Irish universities. All contact with the peer review group, including planning for the site visit, is made by the quality office.

Usually the peer review group visits the unit over a two to three day period, but the length of the visit may be varied to reflect the purpose of the visit and the complexity of the work involved in the unit. The visit is central to the peer review process and is carefully planned. The visit will normally take place during the teaching period, often in the spring.

5.4. STRUCTURE OF THE SITE VISIT

> *"They certainly work you hard when you agree to take part in a QA effort at this university. Taking part as an outside member is a very intense experience. For all that, it's a satisfying one, since the process is well designed and carefully thought out. I have participated in a number of departmental reviews in the US and in Europe and the system at this university strikes me as about the most rational that I've encountered. The balance of internal and external points of view is better judged than in other systems."*
>
> Professor James McCloskey,
> University of California, Santa Cruz

The detailed structure and timetable of the site visit are organised by the quality office in consultation with the unit's co-ordinating committee. The timetable is usually agreed well in advance of the visit. Students, employers and other users of the unit who will meet the review group are selected by a consultation process involving the quality office and the unit's co-ordinating committee. During the course of the visit the review group usually

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- meets with the unit co-ordinating committee, the head of the unit, members of the staff not on the unit co-ordinating committee, past and present students (including postgraduates where appropriate), users of the unit and employers
- visits lecture rooms, laboratories, offices, the library and other facilities that contribute to the activities of the unit
- completes the first draft of the report and presents its principal findings and recommendations to a meeting of the unit prior to departure.

A typical timetable for a peer review group visit appears in appendix 4.

5.5. THE PEER REVIEW GROUP REPORT

In keeping with the formative nature of the process review groups express their recommendations in a manner that supports quality improvement. Such an approach is in keeping with the spirit of an exercise in which an ethos of partnership and trust ensures that real enhancement can result. The review group will generally identify the strengths and weaknesses of the unit, point to examples of good practice to be disseminated throughout the university, and make constructive recommendations on matters that require improvement. Templates for the report are usually provided by the quality office as an aid to ensuring that all aspects are covered in the report. The report may also include any other issues that the peer review group deems appropriate.

When the draft report of the review group has been completed a copy is sent to the quality officer, who forwards it to the Chair of the unit's co-ordinating committee. The Chair circulates it to all members of the committee and invites the committee to indicate any errors of fact. The quality office sends the final report to the relevant university authorities for forwarding to the governing authority. The unit also receives a copy of the final report for dissemination to all members of staff of the unit. The unit is required to respond to the report, and in particular the unit is asked to indicate how it intends to implement the recommendations of the report.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Recommendations for improvement tend to fall into three broad categories. The first refers to organisational, administrative and other matters which are completely under the control of the unit. The second refers to recommended improvements in university services, procedures and facilities which are outside the control of the unit. The third category refers to funding issues requiring either reallocation of resources within the university or investment by the HEA.

In the experience of many universities to date, there is remarkable consistency in recommendations dealing with departmental planning, organisation, teaching and learning, and student care. These recommendations point to an international consensus as to what constitutes best practice in these important areas. While it is often the case that recommendations in a peer review group report for one unit may already be part of the routine procedures in other units in the university, the implementation of recommendations for quality improvement across the sector is now an integral component of all institutional strategic planning. Some examples of recommendations from peer review group reports for academic departments are given on page 46.

Examples of recommendations from peer review group reports on academic departments

- "The department should have a rolling strategic development plan that includes a carefully defined mission statement outlining goals regarding research, teaching and other aspects of the department's work, with a time-scale and procedures for achieving these goals. It should include a motivating vision for the department, describing a desired status of the department or the achievement of some major goals over ten years."
- "Formal decision-making procedures should be based on regular meetings of all full-time staff, with the agenda circulated in advance and with brief minutes of key decisions and action items. Any individual would have the right to submit items for the agenda."
- "A staff/student liaison committee should be put in place, with recommendations going to department meetings for decision."
- "The department should implement alternative methodologies to lecturing for all taught programmes, e.g. seminars, group project work, workshops, problem-solving sessions."
- "Students should have the opportunity to develop presentation and other relevant skills. Feedback to students should be effective and timely. Student assessment should not be too heavily dependent on the final written examination."
- "There should be a formal system for regular assessment by students of the quality of teaching and other matters, with an appropriate feedback mechanism to all department staff."
- "The department should not rely too heavily on adjunct or occasional staff. The bulk of university education should be provided by full-time permanent academics."
- "Interdisciplinary degrees should be encouraged, especially genuinely interdisciplinary combinations with intellectual synergy between them. This process can be facilitated by the use of robust modular systems."
- "It is important to develop a PhD culture in the department. Students, especially recent graduates, should be incorporated in a more structured approach involving formal classes. They should meet as a group and make presentations to each other and to the department."
- "The department should publish a student handbook that includes the following information:
  - Formal procedures for addressing the academic needs and pastoral care of students.
  - An explanation of the overall aims, learning outcomes and purpose of the degree(s) and programme(s) offered, benchmarks for student learning and achievement for each year, clear guidelines on written assignments, principles on marking and feedback to students.
  - An agreed set of student Rights and Responsibilities."

FOLLOW-UP

::

6

" The interviews with the staff, students, and external stakeholders were very revealing and useful, and the peer review group greatly appreciated the willingness of those concerned to come forward and discuss issues very openly. While many concerns were naturally expressed, the overall strong enthusiasm and motivation of the staff of the department was very evident. "

Professor Veronique de Keyser
University of Liege, Belgium

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

6.1. PUBLICATION

The Universities Act provides for publication "in such form or manner as a governing authority thinks fit" of findings arising out of the application of quality assurance procedures, and the governing authority is required to implement the findings having regard to the resources available, unless it would be unreasonable to do so.

Universities have agreed to operate the following policies in regard to publication of peer review group reports as proposed by CHIU:

- Following approval by the governing authority, peer review group reports will be accessible and available on request for reviews involving site visits taking place after January 2002.
- Summaries of the reports will be published on the universities' web sites.
- Self-assessment reports will be confidential to the university.

6.2. IMPLEMENTATION

The mechanisms established to ensure that the recommendations in the peer review group report are properly considered comply with the relevant provisions of Section 35 of the Universities Act 1997, and are designed to draw maximum benefit from the quality review exercise. Typically, following review, the unit prepares a quality improvement plan for implementing the recommendations of the review process, and, if appropriate, requests are submitted for additional resources to the appropriate university authorities. Recommendations are implemented subject to the required resources being available to the institution.

The quality improvement plan: an example

A unit, on receipt of the peer review group report, sets up an implementation committee that represents the views of the unit in all subsequent discussion on follow-up. The implementation committee is fully representative of all the staff in the unit and includes the head. The implementation committee drafts a quality improvement plan which is based on the self-assessment report and the peer review group report. The unit quality improvement plan addresses all recommendations in the peer review group report and includes detailed proposals for implementation of recommendations. The plan includes a list of goals that can be realistically achieved in the following year and a list of longer-term goals to be achieved over five years. The quality officer discusses the plan with the head of the unit and it is then submitted to the appropriate university authorities for consideration.

6.3. RESPONSE OF THE UNIVERSITY TO THE PEER REVIEW GROUP REPORT AND THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The relevant university decision-making bodies, such as the faculty or university management group, consider the peer review group reports and the quality improvement plans.
These bodies issue a formal written response to the peer review group report and the unit quality improvement plan. This response addresses, in particular, areas of the reports that have resource implications for the faculty or university.

In addition to follow-up at unit level individual universities are prioritising specific innovations at institutional level. Below are examples from four universities.

Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

Recognising the primary importance of student learning, good teaching and continuous staff development the university has established a Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. The Centre will incorporate some existing staff and employ the expertise of others, to promote advances in teaching skills and the uses of technology, curricular revision and diversified assessment systems. In addition each semester all teaching staff are offered a confidential service with an independent facilitator, whereby their students in groups of three to four discuss and comment on their teaching. A single copy of a short report is prepared and given to the lecturer. Surveys of the users of this service indicate exceptional levels of satisfaction with it.

Implementing Quality Improvement

The university has established a Quality Improvement Fund (QIF), and a Quality Improvement Finance Committee (QIFC) has been set up to prioritise requests contained in units' quality improvement plans. The QIFC is a sub-committee of the university quality committee. When a submission for a recurrent cost (e.g. a new post) has been approved by the QIFC, 50 per cent is financed by a grant from the QIF for three years and the balance is financed from the appropriate faculty budget. The total cost is absorbed by the faculty budget thereafter. Similarly, minor capital expenditure is financed by a 50 per cent grant matched by 50 per cent from the appropriate faculty budget. The financing of more substantial capital quality improvement requirements that are approved by the finance committee of the governing authority is then discussed with the HEA. The quality officer makes submissions to the QIFC after consultation with the department, the dean(s) and the faculty executive.

Promoting Quality in Teaching and Learning through Self-Evaluation

The university received funding to provide a course for academic staff on Promoting Quality in Teaching and Learning through Self-Evaluation. Two round table discussion sessions were organised to offer an opportunity for staff from a range of academic disciplines to discuss key issues related to quality. Following these meetings, an issues paper was produced, outlining the main areas to be addressed in the course. A series of workshop sessions was provided, focusing on facilitating action learning by participants, related to their own practice in designing and implementing ways of evaluating teaching and learning. The workshops allowed for active participation and for hands-on exercises. There was also an opportunity for follow-up work in small groups or in departments where further work on the development of self-evaluation of teaching and learning was under way. The main outcomes of the workshops were:

- An awareness among participants of the need for a systematic and strategic approach to self-evaluation of teaching and learning
- Clear and coherent documenting of quality systems and standards within participating departments
- The drafting of good practice guidelines and exemplars, based on the work of participants
- Exploration of possible support structures to facilitate further developments in the area of promoting quality in teaching and learning through self-evaluation
- A model of professional development that can be replicated to produce quality improvement in a range of areas within the university.

Improved student facilities

In the course of a quality review in a finance office of the university the physical accommodation available to students for conducting their business in relation to fee payment, grant collection and other financial matters was deemed inadequate. As a result of the recommendation the university provided an appropriate space in a new registration hall, which was designed to accommodate a full range of services including registry fees and grants. The new space has a comfortable waiting area and sufficient space to accord privacy to students while they avail of the services.

REVIEW BY THE HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

::

7

"The Irish Universities welcome this review."

CHIU

"

"

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In accordance with Sections 35 and 49 of the Universities Act 1997, and following consultation with the universities, the HEA has initiated a review of quality assurance procedures in the universities. In undertaking the review in the academic year 2002-2003 the HEA recognised that the implementation of formal quality assurance systems is a relatively new development in the Irish university sector. While all of the universities have been engaged in these activities since the mid-1990s, the statutory requirement for quality assurance has been in place only since June 1997. The purpose of the HEA review, as provided for in the Act, is to assist institutions in achieving their objectives under the legislation. The outcome of the review is therefore intended to be positive and enabling for the universities while at the same time developmental and enhancing in terms of their procedures. The HEA review is structured as follows:

(a) The universities submit a report to the HEA outlining their procedures for QI/QA.
(b) The HEA appoints a single review team to visit all of the universities, the team to comprise three to five people including an independent chairperson of high standing and repute. Membership of the team includes international experts in quality assurance, representatives of non-academic national stakeholders, and others as appropriate.
(c) The review team submits a single consolidated report to the HEA that includes an overall view of quality assurance procedures in each individual university and in the sector as a whole

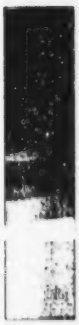
The Irish universities welcome this review.

APPENDIX

::

01

Relevant Extracts from the
Universities Act 1997



QUALITY ASSURANCE

Section 35

(1) A governing authority, in consultation with the academic council, shall, as soon as practicable after the governing authority is established under this Act and at such other times as it thinks fit, require the chief officer to establish procedures for quality assurance aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by the university.

(2) The procedures shall include-

(a) the evaluation, at regular intervals and in any case not less than once in every ten years or such longer period as may be determined by the university in agreement with An tÚdarás, of each department and, where appropriate, faculty of the university and any service provided by the university, by employees of the university in the first instance and by persons, other than employees, who are competent to make national and international comparisons on the quality of teaching and research and the provision of other services at university level, and

(b) assessment by those, including students, availing of the teaching, research and other services provided by the university,

and shall provide for the publication in such form and manner as the governing authority thinks fit of findings arising out of the application of those procedures.

(3) A governing authority shall implement any findings arising out of an evaluation carried out in accordance with procedures established under this section unless, having regard to the resources available to the university or for any other reason, it would, in the opinion of the governing authority, be impractical or unreasonable to do so.

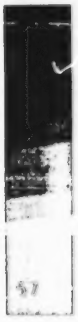
(4) A governing authority shall, from time to time, and in any case at least every fifteen years, having regard to the resources available to the university and having consulted with An tÚdarás, arrange for a review of the effectiveness of the procedures provided for by this section and the implementation of the findings arising out of the application of those procedures.

(5) A governing authority, in a report prepared in accordance with section 41, shall publish the results of a review conducted under sub-section (4).

Section 49

An tÚdarás, in furtherance of its general functions under section 3 of the Higher Education Authority Act, 1971, shall assist the universities in achieving the objectives of Chapters IV, VII and VIII of Part III and may review-

(a) strategic development plans prepared in accordance with section 34,
(b) the procedures established in accordance with section 35,
(c) the policies set out in the statement provided for in section 36 and their implementation, and
(d) the matters referred to in section 50, having regard to any guidelines issued in accordance with that section and information provided in accordance with section 51, and may, following consultation with the universities, publish a report, in such form and manner as it thinks fit, on the outcome of any such review.



APPENDIX

::

02

Conceptual Framework for
Implementation of the
Universities Act 1997

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

REVIEW OF PROCEDURES

		Legislative provision: Section 35 (4-5) of the Universities Act 1997
Initiator	University	(4) A governing authority
Partner	HEA	(having consulted with An tÚdarás)
Cycle	15 years	shall, from time to time and in any case at least every 15 years,
Objectives	Audit Implementation	arrange for a review of the effectiveness of the procedures provided for by this section and the implementation of the findings arising out of the application of those procedures
Outcome	Publication	(5) A governing authority, in a report prepared in accordance with section 41, shall publish the results of a review conducted under subsection (4).

		Legislative provision: Section 49 of the Universities Act 1997
Initiator	HEA	An tÚdarás, in furtherance of its general functions under section 3 of the Higher Education Authority Act, 1971
Initiator	Universities	shall assist the universities in achieving the objectives of Chapters IV, VII and VIII of Part III and may
Partner	Review	review the procedures established in accordance with section 35, and may
Consultation	Universities	following consultation with the universities
	NQAI	[in performing its function under section 35 and 49(b) of the Universities Act of 1997, An tÚdarás shall consult with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland]
Outcome	Publication	publish a report, in such form and manner as it thinks fit, on the outcome of any such review.

		Legislative provision: Section 35 (1-3) of the Universities Act 1997
Ownership	Individual Universities	(1) A governing authority, in consultation with the academic council, shall, as soon as practicable after the governing authority is established under this Act and at such other times as it thinks fit, require the chief officer to establish
Procedures	Quality Assurance	procedures for quality assurance
Objective	Quality Improvement	aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by the university.
Cycle	10 years	(2) The procedures shall include (a) the evaluation, at regular intervals and in any case not less than once in every 10 years or such longer period as may be determined by the university in agreement with an tÚdarás of
Focus	Academic and Service Units	each department and, where appropriate, faculty of the university and any service provided by the university
Elements	Self-assessment	by employees of the university in the first instance and by persons, other than employees, who are competent to make national and international comparisons on the quality of
	Peer Review	
Aspects	Teaching, Research, Services	teaching and research and the provision of services at university level, and
Stakeholders	Students, other users	(b) assessment by those, including students, availing of the teaching, research and other service provided by the university
Outcomes	Publication	and shall provide for the publication in such form and manner as the governing authority thinks fit of findings arising out of the application of those procedures
	Implementation	(3) A governing authority shall implement any findings arising out of an evaluation carried out in accordance with procedures established under this section unless, having regard to the resources available to the university or for any other reason, it would, in the opinion of the governing authority, be impractical or unreasonable to do so.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Policy and Legislative Context of Higher Education in Ireland, 1960-2002

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In order to provide a context for current developments in the area of quality in higher education in Ireland, it is useful to trace the chronology of relevant national policy and legislation over the past forty years or so.

Report of the Commission on Higher Education, 1967

In 1960 the Irish government established the Commission on Higher Education. Having conducted extensive research within Ireland and abroad the Commission reported in 1967. In its report the Commission highlighted the role of government as the primary source of finance to the higher education institutions. The Commission drew attention to the lack of coherent planning in higher education and to the absence of an overall planning authority for the sector. It recognised the balance needed between university autonomy and public accountability. The Commission proposed that a planning and regulatory agency be interposed between government and the higher education institutions. The agency would plan and administer the block grant to the institutions in addition to presiding over the planning and expansion of higher education.

Higher Education Authority Act, 1971

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) was statutorily established in 1971. It is the national funding agency for universities and some other higher educational institutes in Ireland. The respective roles of the universities and the HEA in relation to quality assurance was first made explicit by the Universities Act 1997.

National Council for Educational Awards Act, 1979

In 1979, the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) was given statutory powers over educational awards in a range of non-university institutions funded directly by the Department of Education. The NCEA was empowered to accredit institutions, validate and review programmes of study and to ensure that approved courses had equivalent standards to similar courses in the universities. The NCEA developed quality assurance procedures based on institutional accreditation, the initial validation and periodic review of programmes, and the appointment of external examiners. The role of the NCEA in relation to higher education has now been replaced by that of HETAC.

Charting Our Education Future: Government White Paper, 1995

The White Paper addressed quality assurance in the higher education sector under the general heading of *accountability*. The White Paper noted that the report of the National Education Convention in 1994 had referred to the development of good quality assurance procedures as being "a central task of management in higher education institutions". It stressed that quality is the "hallmark that underpins the status and mobility of graduates both nationally and

internationally". The White Paper acknowledged that quality assurance was a complex issue requiring a careful balance between autonomy and accountability. It referred to the widespread acceptance in higher education of the need for accountability in relation to public funds and the fears that such accountability and efficiency could lead to a diminution of academic control of key academic matters. It was proposed that the responsibility for establishing quality assurance procedures should rest with the institutions themselves. In addition, the institutions directly funded by the HEA would develop general auditing systems. These systems would involve, on a periodic basis, the production of individual internal self-assessments by the faculties or departments involved, followed in each case by an evaluation by national and international peers. The implementation of the recommendations of such audits would be monitored and appropriate performance indicators developed to allow comparisons with national and international benchmarks.

Universities Act, 1997

This was the first piece of legislation to set out specifically the responsibilities of the universities in relation to quality assurance. The Act states that one of the objects of a university is to promote "the highest standards in, and quality of, teaching and research". The legislation requires each university to "establish procedures for quality assurance aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by the university". The universities are required to achieve this by a combination of self-assessment and peer review. The universities are required to publish and implement the outcome of the evaluations, having regard to the resources available to them. The responsibility for establishing the review timetable and for publication rests with the university governing authorities.

The HEA, following consultation with the universities, may review and report on the procedures established by a university for evaluating the quality of its teaching and research and other services that it provides.

Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999

This Act established the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), together with the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). The Act provides for the establishment of a national framework of qualifications and awards. It also deals with issues of quality assurance and includes some amendments to the Universities Act 1997. The HEA is required to consult with the NQAI in performing its review functions under the Universities Act but its role and the autonomy of the universities recognised by the Universities Act are not otherwise affected. The NQAI has responsibilities under the 1999 Act for quality assurance in relation to the Dublin Institute of Technology and any new university.

APPENDIX

::

04

Typical Time-scale for a Quality Review

TYPICAL TIME-SCALE FOR A QUALITY REVIEW

STAGE 1	SELF- ASSESSMENT
- 12 months	Quality office initiates the formal process of quality review. Information sent from quality office to unit
- 12 months	Unit selects co-ordinating committee as per university quality committee guidelines
- 11 months	University quality committee considers nominees for peer review group
- 10 months	Peer review group selected by university quality committee
- 6 to 4 months	Unit prepares self-assessment report, including collection of data, surveys etc
- 2 months	First draft of the self-assessment report
- 1 month	Self-assessment report sent to peer review group
STAGE 2	PEER REVIEW AND SITE VISIT (SEE EXAMPLE OF TIMETABLE BELOW)
STAGE 3	IMPLEMENTATION
+1 month	Peer review group report received by quality office and forwarded to unit
+2 months	Peer review group report considered by university quality committee. Unit prepares quality improvement plan
+5 months	Unit's quality improvement plan sent to quality office and considered by appropriate university committee(s)
+6 months	Peer review group report and unit quality improvement plan considered by faculty/university management group, who draft the faculty/university response (in consultation with unit)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

+7 months	Draft of governing authority report (Introduction, Summary of Peer Review Group Report, Summary of Unit Quality Improvement Plan and Faculty/University Response) considered by university quality committee
+9 months	Report on the outcome of the review considered by governing authority
+11 months	Publication of governing authority report on the university's website
+12 months	Follow-up meeting between unit and quality office

TYPICAL TIMETABLE FOR PEER REVIEW GROUP VISIT TO AN ACADEMIC UNIT

PRE-VISIT BRIEFING, DAY BEFORE SITE VISIT

18.00 - 19.30	Meeting of members of the peer review group. Briefing by university quality officer. Group agrees work schedule and assignment of tasks for the following two days
20.00	Orientation and social dinner for members of the peer review group

DAY 1

09.00 - 09.30	Convening of peer review group in unit, formal welcome
09.30 - 13.00	Consideration of self-assessment report with the writers of the report and other unit staff, including administrative / technical / support staff, as appropriate. Private meetings of members of the peer review group with staff
13.00 - 14.00	Working lunch
14.00 - 14.30	Visit to core facilities of unit
14.30- 17.00	Meetings with representatives of undergraduate students / post-graduate students / recent graduates / employers, as appropriate
17.30 - 22.00	Meeting of peer review group to identify remaining aspects for review and to agree tasks for the following day, with a break for dinner

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

DAY 2

09.00 - 09.45 Meeting with senior officers of the university

09.45 - 10.30 Visit to library, meeting with library staff

10.30 - 11.00 Visits to facilities such as lecture theatres, computer laboratories

11.30 - 12.30 Meeting with the dean/vice-president for research and the dean of the faculty

12.30 - 13.00 Meeting with head of unit to clarify any outstanding issues

13.00 - 14.00 Working lunch

14.00 - 16.00 Preparation of first draft of peer review group report

16.00 - 16.30 Exit presentation to all staff of the unit by the chair of the peer review group, summarising the principal findings of the review.

APPENDIX

::

05

Home Institutions of International Reviewers

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE HOME INSTITUTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL REVIEWERS

COUNTRY	INSTITUTION
BELGIUM	University of Liège
CANADA	Memorial University Newfoundland
DENMARK	Aarhus School of Business University of Odense
ENGLAND	ACCAS Sussex De Montfort University Leicester Durham University Imperial College London Institute of Education London Institution of Civil Engineers (UK) King's College London London School of Economics Oxford Philanthropic, Oxford Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham Royal Holloway London Royal London School of Medicine & Dentistry, London St. Mary's Hospital London University College London University of Bath University of Birmingham University of Bradford University of Bristol University of Cambridge University of Canterbury University of Essex University of Exeter University of Keele University of Kent University of Leeds University of Leicester University of Liverpool University of London University of Manchester University of Newcastle University of Nottingham University of Oxford University of Plymouth University of Portsmouth University of Reading University of Sheffield University of Southampton University of Surrey University of Sussex University of Warwick
FINLAND	University of Jyvaskyla
FRANCE	University of Paris Sud Orsay Universite Rennes 2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE HOME INSTITUTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL REVIEWERS

COUNTRY	INSTITUTION
GERMANY	Chemnitz University of Technology
	Institut Fur Musikwissenschaft, Munich
	Justus Liebig Universitat Gieben
	Mathematisches Institut, Tubingen
	Saarland University
	Universitat Regensburg
	Universitat Gottingen
	Wissenschaftzentrum, Berlin
NETHERLANDS	IHE-Delft
	University of Amsterdam
	University of Groningen
	University of Wageningen
NORTHERN IRELAND	Queen's University Belfast
	University of Ulster
PORTUGAL	Universidade de Lisboa
SCOTLAND	Department of Health, Edinburgh
	Monklands Hospital, Airdrie
	Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh
	Royal Scottish Academy for Music & Drama
	St. Andrew's University
	Strathclyde University
	University of Aberdeen
	University of Dundee
	University of Edinburgh
	University of Glasgow
SPAIN	University of Burgos
SWEDEN	Karolinska Institute
	Malmo University
	University of Goteborg
SWITZERLAND	Institute for Management Development, Lausanne
USA	Brookhaven, New York
	Brown University
	Harvard University
	Michigan State University
	MIT
	Nebraska Methodist College
	Northwestern University
	Telecordia Technologies, NJ
	Tufts University, Boston
	University of California (Santa Cruz)
	University of Connecticut
	University of Maryland, Baltimore
	University of Notre Dame
	University of Wisconsin (Madison)
WALES	University of Aberystwyth
	University College of North Wales
	University of Wales, Cardiff

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX

::

06

Institutional Context of Higher Education in Ireland

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

General administration at national level

The Department of Education and Science is the government department with overall responsibility for the administration of higher education.

Higher education in Ireland is provided mainly by the universities, institutes of technology and colleges of education. In addition a number of other third level institutions provide specialist education in such fields as art and design, medicine, business studies, music and law. Most higher education is provided in institutions supported very substantially by the state. The Institutes of Technology and other designated institutions are funded directly from the Department of Education and Science.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA)

Established in 1969 as a corporate statutory body, the HEA is a planning and budgetary agency that works on behalf of the Government with the universities and a limited number of other designated institutions. Members are appointed by government.

The universities

There are seven publicly funded universities in Ireland: University College Dublin; University College Cork; National University of Ireland, Galway; National University of Ireland, Maynooth; the University of Dublin (Trinity College); Dublin City University, and the University of Limerick. A total of just over 56 per cent of all higher education students are in the universities.

The generic governance structure in the universities is a governing authority to which the president or provost reports as chief officer. There is also an Academic Council.

Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC)

The National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) was established in 1972 to validate third level courses and awards qualifications for colleges outside the university sector. It was superseded in 2001 by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC). HETAC awards include degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Conference of the Heads of Irish Universities (CHIU)

CHIU is an organisation of the heads of the Irish universities which meets on a regular basis to discuss university affairs and to liaise with the HEA. CHIU also represents the Irish universities nationally and internationally.

APPENDIX

::

07

Glossary of Acronyms

CHIU	Conference of Heads of Irish Universities
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EUA	European University Association
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HETAC	Higher Education and Training Awards Council
IUQB	Irish Universities Quality Board
IUQSC	Inter-University Quality Steering Committee
NCEA	National Council for Educational Awards
NQAI	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
QI/QA	Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance
QIF	Quality Improvement Fund
QIFC	Quality Improvement Finance Committee

REFERENCES

Conference of Heads of Irish Universities — *Proposal for a Process of Quality Improvement* (QI) *and Quality Assurance* (QA). Dublin: CHIU, 1995

Davies, John — "Cultural Change in Universities in the Context of Strategic and Quality Initiatives", in Pierre Tabatoni, John Davies and Andris Barblan, *Strategic Management and Universities' Institutional Development*. http://www.ch.eua 2002

EU Commission — *Pilot project for Evaluating Quality in Higher Education: European Report*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 1996

Inter-University Quality Steering Committee — *Report on the Pilot Projects*. Dublin: IUQSC, 1998

Kells, H.R. — *Self-Study Processes, A Guide to Self-Evaluation in Higher Education*. Phoenix, Arizona: Oryx Press, 1995

Skilbeck, Malcolm — *The University Challenged, A Review of International Trends and Issues with Particular Reference to Ireland*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority, 2001

Conference of Heads of Irish Universities
10 Lower Mount St. Dublin 2

Tel: 01 676 4948
Fax: 01 666 2815

Email: chiu-info@chiu.ie
www.chiu.ie

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NDP
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

HEA
Higher Education Authority
An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas

CHIU
Conference of Heads of Irish Universities

Data Creative Communications 1850 693 693

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC Educational Resources Information Center

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: A FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY IN IRISH UNIVERSITIES: MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE	
Author(s): CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF IRISH UNIVERSITIES [C.H.I.U.]	
Corporate Source: CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF IRISH UNIVERSITIES	Publication Date: 2003

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

☑

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

☐

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

☐

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, please

Signature: Michael Mc Grath	Printed Name/Position/Title: MICHAEL MC GRATH DIRECTOR	
Organization/Address: CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF IRISH UNIVERSITIES	Telephone: 353-1-6764948	FAX: 353-1-6612815
	E-Mail Address: MMCGRATH@CHIU.IE	Date: 2 MAY 2004

(Over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor: CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF IRISH UNIVERSITIES
Address: 10 LR MOUNT ST DUBLIN 2
~~Price~~: AVAILABLE ON LINE ON WWW.CHIU.IE WWW.1496.IE.

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

—

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education
One Dupont Circle NW #630
Washington, DC 20036
fax (202)452-1844